



North Wicklow Children's Disability Network Team Family Handbook





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Welcome!

You are very welcome to our team.

This booklet contains information you may need to know about the Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT). We hope that this information booklet will guide you through working with us and the supports we offer.

Our team provides a range of supports for children with complex needs. We are a family-centred service and view parents and guardians as experts on their child. We will work with you as an equal member of your child's team. The team will provide the supports your child needs to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

If you have any questions please ask a member of our team. We look forward to working with you.



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North Wicklow Children's Disability Network Team.

How Children's Disability Network Team's (CDNT's) were formed:

Children's Disability Network Teams were formed in 2021 a part of a reconfiguration of existing disability services with team members from Enable Ireland, the HSE, St. Catherine's Association, St. John of Gods and St. Michael's House.

Working with the Children's Disability Network Team - What happens next?

You and your child will meet with a number of our team members. We will work with you to make a plan to support your child's and family's needs.



How is this done?

The team takes child and family-centred approach. This means the team will together with you to figure out what the priorities are for you and your child. Parents and guardians are experts on their child so you will be an equal member of your child's team.

Team Members and Interdisciplinary Team Working

The Children's Disability Network Team works in an interdisciplinary way. This is where different health professionals work together and in partnership with the child and their family. By working together with you and your child we are able to support your child to achieve their goals in a comprehensive manner. One team member may be working on a range of goals set in collaboration with you and other members of the team.

Working in Partnership with your Team

We encourage parents/ guardians to share their views on their service. We respect your right as parents to make and be involved with decisions about your child. To ensure that your child and family receive the best possible service, we encourage you to always:

- Attend your Individual Family Support Plan (see below) meetings and allow us to help you with the process.
- Ask questions about any part of your child's service.
- Talk with your team. Listen and note down any information the team give if you need to.
- Implement the advice given by the team on into your everyday life at home.
- Reflect on your child's achievements.
- Focus and identify new goals for your child as they continue to make progress.
- Let us know if there is something you think team should know.
- Give us feedback on how we are doing/ you feel the team is supporting you as a family.

Your role as a parent/guardian in your child's interventions

- As an expert on your child and an equal member of the team you will be asked to actively participate in sessions with your child. This is to help you become confident about working on goals with your child in your home routines.
- We recommend that interventions are integrated into daily routines at home, as they will be easier to carry out and more effective if they are part of daily life.
- If we are overwhelming you with information or things to do – let us know. We are always happy to help you with making home programmes work for you as a family.

Your Child and Family's Key worker

You will have a **key worker**. Your key worker will be a member of your child's team. Your key worker can help you with any queries you may have about the service and supports you are receiving and guide you in the right direction.

The keyworker will also:

- Share information
- Respond to any queries or concerns you may have about our service
- Help you in preparing for your Individual Family Support Plan meetings (see below).
- Help you identify your child's needs
- Provide support to your family

Individual Family Support Plan

What Is It?

An Individual Family Support Plan is a plan which sets out the goals for the child and how the family and team are going to work towards them.

Who Is Involved?

- Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) and any other key people in your child's life you would like to attend, e.g. childminder or grandparent.
- Your key worker (see above).
- Any relevant team members if needed.
- Children over 12 years can be invited to attend this meeting if appropriate.

What Happens?

- You will discuss what is important for your child and family.
- The team will work with you to agree goals to target what is important for you and your child.
- These will be written into a plan. You will then get a written plan that will outline what both you and the team will do to achieve these goals - see the example below*.

When?

This plan is reviewed with you and updated yearly at a minimum.

*Here is an example of an Individual Family Support Plan Goal for an 8 year old who has difficulty with the social aspects of play.

Table 1 – Sample Individual Family Support Plan Goal

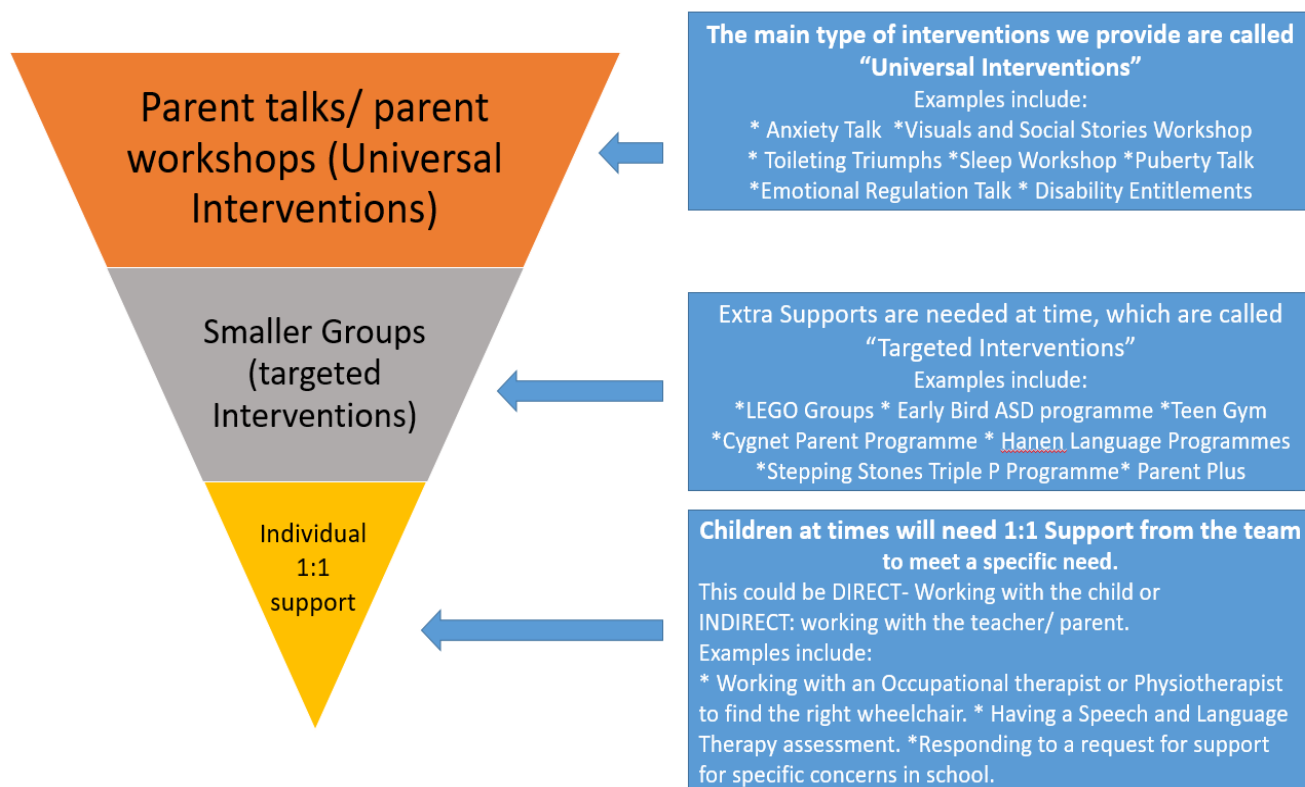
What is important to you right now?	What will the family and others do?
<p>Priorities Jimmy will find it easier to initiate play and develop friendships.</p> <p>Goal Jimmy will engage in joint imaginative play with his construction set for 30 minutes with two classmates of his choice at home.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set up short play dates once a week with two classmates of his choosing. 2) Family will rehearse pretend play scenarios with Jimmy the day before the playdate. 3) Support Jimmy if he moves away from joint cooperative play. 4) Bring Jimmy to the Lego group in the CDNT centre and attend the parent and teacher feedback session.
What is happening now?	What will the CDNT do?
<p>Baseline Jimmy has a good imagination and loves any construction toys. He is interested in classmates but finds it hard to initiate play. He will play in a group for a short time if others include him.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Target social communication and cooperative play skills in a 6-week Lego group, where Jimmy will be matched with peers. 2) Offer a parent and teacher session to feedback on strategies that worked well with Jimmy in the Lego group so they can be implemented at home and school. 3) Offer the universal training to parents and teachers on supporting social communication and peer interaction at home and school.

If your child no longer requires the supports of the team and you no longer have goals for your child within the team, your child may be discharged from the team. Your child may be re-referred if they require the supports of the team in the future.

How Services Are Delivered

How services are delivered depends on the needs your child and family at a given time. Where possible support will take place in the environment that relates to the agreed goal. For example- A meal-time goal may be addressed in the home, or a school behavioural issue may be targeted with classroom supports. The team will support you with different levels and types of intervention.

Types of Team Interventions



Universal Interventions

Universal interventions are universal supports that benefit all children accessing services such as parent training, information sessions, teacher training, and information leaflets.

Targeted Interventions

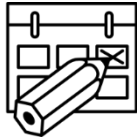
Targeted interventions are targeted supports such as parents’ programmes or groups targeting a specific skill such as “skills for school” groups, handwriting groups and language groups.

Individualised Interventions

Individualised interventions are those such as one-to-one or joint intervention sessions to address a specific goal on your Individualised Family Support Plan.

Your team will work out a plan with you regarding the types of intervention that are appropriate to your child and family’s need around the time of your Individualised Family Support Plan.

The Individualised Family Support Plan may include information sessions, family training, direct intervention (group, individual or family) and specialist services. One team member could be working with your child on goals set by all of the team.



Things to Note When Attending Appointments

Before or when you arrive, our team will guide you through the relevant health and safety procedures you will need to know.

- You will need to sign in at reception and include the number of people with you. If possible, we would ask that only the relevant people attend the appointment.
- We would ask that you supervise your child/children at all times including in the carpark and while waiting for an appointment.
- Parents are expected to stay in the building for the duration of your child's appointment.
- Please bring any emergency medication your child might need.
- If you need to have your phone turned on during an appointment, please ensure it is on silent.
- Explicit consent must be sought by staff or service users in advance to take a photo or record part of your session.
- If you think a social story (a personalised picture story about what to expect) or a visual schedule would help prepare your child for attending appointments let us know.

Scheduling Appointments and Cancellations

We aim to work in with you and will try to schedule appointments that will work for you as a family where possible. Members of the team try to work with as many children as possible within a tight schedule. We understand that families are busy and sometimes appointments may need to be cancelled or rescheduled.

- If you cannot attend an appointment, please give us as much notice as possible, so we can offer that time to another child.
- If you arrive late for an appointment the session time may be reduced or may be rescheduled.
- Please contact us to reschedule an appointment if your child is sick with a transmissible illness.
- If you do not attend an appointment and do not contact us to cancel it, we will refer to our Family Engagement Policy to manage missed appointments. If you have to miss an appointment and do not contact

us, one of our team will contact you and go through this policy with you.

Repeated missed appointments may result in discharge from the service

Private Therapy

Families may choose to engage in private therapy for a number of reasons while engaging with the supports of the of the Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT). There is a CDNT policy on accessing private, independent, complementary and alternative therapies. Please ask a member of your team if you would like an overview of this policy: *National policy for Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) regarding children accessing private, independent, complementary and alternative therapies.*

The policy can be accessed by searching for the above or through this link: [Appendix III \(hse.ie\)](#)



What if my child attends a private therapist?

- It is important that you tell us if your child is attending a private therapist. We request that you ask your private therapist to contact the CDNT as we need to talk to them about how we can help your child.
- You should also let the team know about any private assessments you arrange for your child. This is because certain assessments cannot be repeated within a period of time. If a child is assessed again by a team member within that time the results are of no use or benefit.
- We assure you that attending a private therapist will not affect the service your child receives from us or their place on the waiting list.
- The only exception to this is when the private therapy conflicts with the intervention being provided by the team. If both continue it would hold your child's progress back. In this case we will talk to you about why we don't think this will help your child. If you choose to continue attending the private therapist, the team may have to defer providing intervention.

Discharges

Your child will be discharged for the Children's Disability Network Team if:

- Your child no longer presents with complex needs.
- They have no outstanding goals to be achieved with the Children's Disability Network Team.

- They are older than 18 years of age and have completed their final year in second level education.
- Discharge is requested by parents, or by the young person if aged over 16 years.
- The family has not brought their child for services on a persistent and ongoing basis despite the best efforts by the team to engage and facilitate them.

Children/ young people can be re-referred after discharge and will have their original referral date recognised as their date of referral.

Transfers

Your child will be transferred from the service when:

- Their needs can be better met by another service e.g. Primary care or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- They move out of the CDNT's catchment area.
-



Comments, Complaints, Compliments

We welcome any feedback that will help us improve our service and your experience. If we are doing something particularly well please let us know about it as we would like to do it more often.

You can give your feedback in the following ways:

- Emailing your feedback to: cdnt5wicklow@enableireland.ie
- Talking to a team member who will be able to manage your feedback directly
- Making an appointment to meet with the Children's Disability Network Manager (CDNM)
- Completing the Enable Ireland Feedback form onsite in our reception area, or online here:

<https://www.enableireland.ie/feedback-and-complaints>

Confidentiality and Data Protection

- The Children's Disability Network Team complies with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation and employees have a confidentiality obligation under their contract of employment.
- Information is shared within the team and with outside agencies on a strict 'need to know' basis only.
- Families will be asked who they wish us to share information about their child with.
- Record keeping: We will keep a record of the services you and your child receive from us. The record on leaving the service will tell the story of your child during the period in which they availed of services from the CDNT. A copy of reports will be provided to you.



Child Safety and Welfare

The CDNT aims to work in the best interests of children at all times and to promote children's welfare. We have a duty to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in our services. We do this by:

- Making sure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and where necessary, supervised.
- Letting parents know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy with.

As part of the Children First Act 2015 there is a legal obligation on certain staff (mandated people), to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency. Under this legislation all CDNT members who work directly with children are mandated people.

We have a duty to notify TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency if we see or hear anything we are concerned about in terms of a child being protected and safe e.g. children left at home alone, children regularly not being brought to appointments and children who are being physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

Dignity and Respect Policy

The CDNT has a dignity and respect at work policy. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to protecting the dignity of employees and to encourage respect for others at work. The policy applies to all employees, service users and their families, contractors, suppliers and visitors. This is done by creating a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or sexual harassment and by welcoming diversity. There are clear guidelines for dealing with any breaches of behaviour in this regard.

Social Media Policy

We have a social media policy. The purpose of this policy is to define acceptable, safe and secure standards for the use and management of social media within the CDNT.

It is never permissible to post a video or photograph of service users or staff to social media sites without the specific joint consent of the service user or staff member.

If defamatory material is posted on a social networking site, defamation claims may arise against the users.





Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.. If you have any questions or queries one of our team will be happy to help you. We look forward to working with you, your child and family.

National Policy for Children's Disability Network Teams Family Engagement and Attendance

Family Leaflet

We know it can be difficult at times for you to take part in planned therapies/services for your child alongside the many other family demands, however we as a team we become concerned when you do not bring your child to appointments.

We use the 'Managing Attendance and Family Engagement' Policy to support families to engage with our service. This is a summary of the policy.

Second Missed Appointment

(in a row)



A member of the team will phone you and try to find out about any difficulties you have in bringing your child to the appointment. If they cannot contact you by phone they will write to you with a new appointment date and time.

It is your responsibility to make contact with your child's team.



What Happens Next?

If you do not contact the team manager or miss a 4th appointment (in a row) we will **discharge your child from the service.**

You will get a discharge letter and a letter will be sent to your child's GP and other relevant agencies.

If there are concerns in relation to the welfare of the child, a referral will be made to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

01 First Missed Appointment

A member of the team will send you a text - informing you of a new appointment date and time.



02

03 Third Missed Appointment

(in a row)

If you have not made contact with the team, you will receive a letter from the team manager. The letter will ask you to make contact with the team **within two weeks**, if you want the service to continue.



04

It is your responsibility to make contact with your child's team.

National Policy for Children's Disability Network Teams Family Engagement and Attendance

What Can You Expect From Us?

- Treat you and your child with courtesy, respect and dignity, as we work with you to meet your child's needs.
- Provide a family centred service that meets your child's needs to the best of our abilities and resources.
- Keep you up to date with information about your child's needs.
- Where possible arrange appointments that best suit your family.
- Talk with you about recommendations, referrals or requests for support from other services or agencies.
- Implement best practice guidelines, and follow local, national and corporate policies as outlined by our employer.
- Ensure that your child's health, safety, and welfare concerns are first and foremost at all times.
- We are obliged by law to work with Tusla, The Child and Family Agency if there are concerns about the care and welfare of your child.

What do we expect from you?

- Inform the team if you change telephone number and/or address.
- To treat team members with courtesy and respect.
- To attend each of your child's appointments and follow local guidelines about attending appointments.
- If possible, make arrangements to have siblings looked after and only bring the child to their appointment.
- Arrive on time for your appointment.
- Let us know 24 hours in advance if you need to cancel or change the appointment.
- Cancel the appointment if your child is unwell - please adhere to local service guidelines.
- Be actively involved in your child's therapy.
- Treat other families you meet through the service with respect and confidentiality.
- If you have questions, comments or concerns, please contact a member of your child's team or their key worker.



Appendix 1 Family Forum

What is the Family Forum?

A place for families to discuss issues and ideas:

The Family Forum is a place for families linked with the team to discuss general issues and ideas about the children's disability services the Team is responsible for.

How often does the family forum meet and who attends?

The Family Forum meets two to four times a year.

The forum is facilitated by someone who does not work in our Children's Disability Network Team. The Children's Disability Network Manager will also attend each meeting.

How can I get involved?

You will receive an invitation to every Family Forum to share your thoughts and ideas.

If you would like to become more involved, you can nominate yourself to stand for election as a family representative.

What does a Family Representative do?

Two Family Representatives are elected by the Family Forum. They meet with the Children's Disability Network Managers to relay issues and ideas raised at the Forum, provide feedback to the Forum, and attend meetings of the larger Family Representative Group and Children's Disability Network Governance Group in South East Dublin and Wicklow (CHE).

Specific concerns regarding your child:

The Family Forum discusses general issues and ideas for service development. If you have specific concerns about your child, or wish to make a complaint about the service, you should speak with your key contact, the Children's Disability Network Manager or use HSE Your Service Your Say/Enable Ireland complaints procedure (Delete as appropriate)

Family Forum Terms of Reference

1. To involve families in the development of children's disability services in their local Children's Disability Network through:
The expression of ideas for future service development and improve existing services
Identification of issues and ideas for service development and/or enhancement
2. To elect two Family Representatives who will meet the Children's Disability Network Manager (CDNM) regarding Network issues and ideas raised by the Family Forum, and will join the Family Representative Group at area level
3. To share information on:
Service provision, governance, and access
Community supports
Rights of the child and the family
Other relevant topics of interest
4. To facilitate networking and sharing knowledge and experiences amongst families.

Family Representative Role

1. Represent their Family Forum by expressing their views, concerns and suggestions for improvements based on collation of general areas and themes from the forum.
2. Represent all issues and ideas raised by families
3. Give feedback to families about issues and ideas raised and resulting actions

Family Representative Group Terms of Reference

1. For the 2 elected Family Representatives from each network in CHO (South East Dublin and Wicklow area) to learn and share feedback from the various Family Forums
2. To co-ordinate attendance of two Family Representative Group members at each CHO Children's Disability Networks Governance Group (CDNNGG) meeting
3. Representatives of the Family Representative Group to meet with the CDNMs Operational Management Group (OMG) no less than four times per year to raise issues for discussion and resolution at appropriate levels of the governance structure
4. To develop a feedback template for feedback to the family forums

Procedure for selection of Family Representatives

1. Two Family Representatives will be elected every 24 months. Family members can serve more than one term if they choose to nominate themselves again for the role.
2. A nomination form will be sent to all families with invitation and dates for Family Forum meetings.
3. Family members who wish to nominate themselves should complete the nomination form and return to the CDNMs one week before the Family Forum.
4. Two representatives will be elected by those in attendance at the family forum. The Election will be conducted by the independent facilitator.